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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9660
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 2394
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#)1. Aftermath of the Earthquake in Haiti
- [1](#)2. Mideast
- [1](#)3. Israel-Turkey Relations:

Key stories in the media:

All media continued to report extensively on the aftermath of the

Haiti earthquake and the successful activity of the Israeli field hospital in Port-au-Prince.

The Jerusalem Post reported that sources close to Jordan's General Intelligence Department (GID) revealed yesterday that last week's failed attempt on the lives of Israeli diplomats in Jordan was apparently carried out on instructions from Tehran. The sources were quoted as saying that the GID was investigating the possibility that the explosives used in the attack had been smuggled into the kingdom by Iranian diplomats. The sources said that the attack itself was apparently carried out by local al-Qaida supporters who received money and explosives from Iran. On Monday, Al-Arabiya reported that an Amman taxi driver was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the bombing. According to the sources, the GID believes that the attack came in response to the killing of Iranian scientist Professor Massoud Ali Muhammadi in Teheran last week. On Monday, Iran's Interior Minister Mostafa Muhammad Najjar vowed to take revenge on Israel over Ali Muhammadi's assassination. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accused Israel of being behind the assassination, which he said had been carried out in "Zionist style."

On 1/17 Israel Hayom reported that Dennis Ross, who served as President Bill Clinton's special envoy to the Middle East and who currently serves as an adviser to President Obama, visited Israel secretly last week and met with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. The newspaper stressed that Ross advises the President on the Iranian nuclear program.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday hard-line Likud Knesset Member Danny Danon told the daily that Israelis do not regard President Obama as a fair negotiator and that he would give the President a failing grade for his first year in office. Danon is about to leave for a four-day visit to the U.S.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul, and Mary is in Israel to promote Operation Respect, which seeks to foster a compassionate learning environment for kids. Yarrow was quoted as saying on Sunday: "I've never been prouder of being American than because of what the American Embassy is doing here."

On Sunday Haaretz reported that in October Shin Bet head Yuval Diskin told PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas that Israel would turn the West Bank into a second Gaza if the latter did not ask for a postponement of the vote on the Goldstone report at the U.N. Human Rights Council.

The media reported that yesterday police forces and Shin Bet agents raided the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva in Jerusalem with the goal of arresting suspects connected to the arson attack at the mosque in the West Bank village Yasuf on December 11. Meanwhile, additional suspects were arrested from the yeshiva in the Yitzhar settlement.

Leading media reported that the IDF has begun to take more stringent steps against acts of insubordination and that it decided yesterday for the first time to discharge from military service a soldier who supported insubordination. The soldier in question is one of the soldiers who raised the placard calling for insubordination in the Shimshon Battalion.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli defense officials as saying yesterday that the Defense Ministry is working on allocating the funding to manufacture seven Iron Dome missile defense batteries over the next two years.

Leading media reported that on 1/17 Infrastructure Minister Uzi Landau (Yisrael Beiteinu) visited Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates -- the first Israeli minister to visit one of the Gulf states. Landau attended an international conference on alternative energy alongside representatives of Arab states such as Syria and Lebanon. Landau's visit, which took place with the agreement of the UAE, is the result of a decision by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) that Israel would participate and have full access to the organization's center in Abu Dhabi. Maariv reported that recently, Israel's standing in the organization has also upgraded to the level of a state with significant involvement.

HaQaretz reported that a Libyan delegation visited Bethlehem three weeks ago, as part of the PAQs plan to woo the next host nation of the Arab League summit.

The media reported that yesterday, during the historic joint Israeli-German Cabinet session in Berlin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel backed tough sanctions on Iran. PM Benjamin Netanyahu called for the imposition of crippling sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday Foreign Ministry Director-General Yossi Gal flew to Turkey to take part in the biannual Turkish-Israeli strategic dialogue session -- according to the newspaper, a further sign (along with DM Ehud BarakQs visit to Ankara on Sunday) that ties with Turkey have not collapsed.

Israel Hayom reported that next week a delegation of top executives from Lockheed-Martin, which is developing the future F-35 combat jet, will be coming to Israel for meetings with government and military officials. The deal in which Israel will purchase the future stealth bombers is expected to be signed either at the end of March or in early April. The differences between the parties currently revolve mainly around the cost of the plane and the AmericansQ objections to IsraelQs desire to install Israeli electronic warfare systems in the planes. That said, Israeli officials were quoted as saying that progress has been made in the talks. Israel will receive the planes in 2014 or 2016. In the initial stage, Israel will purchase 25 planes, with an option for purchasing an additional 50. Israeli officials said that while the security establishment was interested in purchasing the planes, it would not do so Qat any price.Q In 2002 Israel joined the multi-national project to build the combat jet of the future as an Qobserver,Q and not as an active partner. Israel Hayom quoted Qsome peopleQ as saying that the decision not to become a full-fledged participant in the project was a very bad mistake.

Major media reported that Shas has become the first ultra-Orthodox party to ask to join the World Zionist Organization.

Leading media reported that Angel Gurria, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) begins a two-day visit in Israel today, ahead of the countryQs possible admission to the organization. HaQaretz reported that confidence is mounting Qin the Jerusalem corridorsQ that Israel will join the organization this May, becoming its 32nd member. The final decision will be made by the OECD ministerial committee. Some media reported that Gurria has raised some reservations about IsraelQs entry into the OECD.

The Jerusalem Post and other media reported that Jewish religious manuscripts rescued by U.S. troops from Iraq are being restored in Maryland.

1. Aftermath of the Earthquake in Haiti:

Block Quotes:

I. QValiant in Disaster

Senior columnist and longtime peace advocate Yoel Marcus wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (1/19): QEvery time disaster strikes anywhere in the world, I am filled anew with admiration at how ready and willing we are to assist and how speedy, effective, organized, and wholehearted that assistance is. We did not rush aid to Haiti because there is a Jewish community there. We went there for humanitarian reasons. As a nation that has experienced disasters and bereavement for generations, other nations' disasters do not leave us indifferent. Our photographers and reporters hurried over there not to humiliate some Turkish ambassador, but because they want to show -- and rightly so -- an attractive side of Israel, for a change. It is easier for us to organize rescue operations outside Israel than do all that is necessary to advance peace inside it and thus prevent deadly attacks on our home front. There is no need to wait for an Qearthquake,Q as the Yom Kippur War was dubbed, to achieve a Qpeace of the brave.

II. QIsrael - a Leader among the Community of Nations

Gershon Baskin, Co-Director of the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (1/19): QHumanitarian disasters around the world bring out the best in Israel and in Israelis.... [But] our high level of morality demonstrated in Haiti will not cover up our immorality in Gaza nor will it postpone the collision course that we are on with the rest of the world. Only real movement toward real peace, which is the morally right thing to do and also serves our interests, will place Israel where it needs to be and where it can easily be -- as a welcome member of the community of nations and even, perhaps, as a light unto nations.

III. QGood Intentions but Slow and Cumbersome Implementation

Avraham Ben-Zvi, visiting Professor of Political Science at Haifa University and an expert in U.S.-Israel relations, wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (1/17): QThe tragedy that struck Haiti presented a challenge to Obama: to try to demonstrate to the United States and the world that the might of the American superpower is not directed only at military goals, but that it is also meant for noble humanitarian purposes. [But] despite the good intentions, the impression has been formed that the American giant has not yet learned the secret of improvisation and inventiveness and that the rescue operations started slowly and in a cumbersome fashion. Instead of devoting initial attention to urgent tasks -- including the immediate running of the airport's control tower and the creation of a logistic infrastructure to receive the incoming aid -- [U.S.] activity dispersed to less vital domains. It can only be hoped that the crouching giant will learn in the future how to combine an abundance of resources and advanced technology with some mind speed.

12. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

1I. QIn Order to Vanquish the Other

Former Meretz leader, former Justice Minister, and chief Israeli promoter of the Geneva Initiative, Yossi Beilin, wrote in the independent Israel Hayom (1/18): QIt is not enough that both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have agreed to reach a permanent-status agreement or that that they have agreed in principle to adopt a two-state solution, as long as both sides view negotiations between them as a zero-sum game.... Progress will come through thinking that an agreement is one that only has two winners. I believe that we proved the possibility of mutual victory in the Geneva Initiative that [Benjamin Netanyahu] agreed upon six years ago.

II. QThe Gaza Quagmire

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (1/19): QWere Hamas to begin to lose its grip, it is far from clear that the joint Israeli and Egyptian hope of the return of secular Fatah rule to Gaza and enabling a new stability is well-founded.... Although al-Qaida has long chastised Hamas for failing to look beyond Israel and link up with bin Laden's global war, it is also skeptical over the survivability and ideological commitment of global jihadis in Gaza. The jihadis remain hopeful, however, and claim to be plotting large-scale attacks in a bid to earn al-Qaida's approval. Al-Qaida has proven its ability to move into the vacuum left behind by failed states and convert territories with no sovereignty into bases for global jihad. For now, Hamas retains a firm grip on Gaza, and the prospect of its replacement by an even more radical entity, made up of a coalition of al-Qaida-affiliated organizations dedicated to bin Laden's global war, is remote. But the ambition is certainly there. And the existence of so dark a scenario only underlines the

escalated complexity of attempting to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when the Palestinian people are divided into two distinct, mutually hostile, geographic, and political entities.

III. QIsrael Is in the Picture, Too

Arab affairs correspondent Smadar Perry wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (1/19): QThis week Dr. Mustafa Fiki, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the [Egyptian] Parliament, entered the debate [over his country's Presidential elections]. He has been closely associated with [Hosni] Mubarak since the time when he served as Qinformation secretaryQ.... According to the veteran politician, QLike it or not, only the candidate who will earn American support, only the one whose nomination will not be disapproved by Israel, will be able to be elected Egypt's next president.Q In other words: the period of interrogation is over. Behind the scenes, Washington and Jerusalem have entered the picture and are strongly involved in the process of the launching and smooth entry of the heir in his role.. From

Israel's angle there is not room for consequences or homework. Those who need can study Gamal [Mubarak]. He, himself, will be wary of coming close to Israel in order not to be scratched at home. This is the plan, this is the man, and everything is ready. Still, an experienced fox in Israel is warning that the story isn't over.

13. Israel-Turkey Relations:

Block Quotes:

QFacing Turkey

Former Israeli Ambassador to the U.S., former President of Tel Aviv University, and former Chief Israeli Negotiator with Syria Professor Itamar Rabinovich, wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (1/19): QThe strained relations between Ankara and Jerusalem affect the balance of power in the entire region. A decade ago, Turkey was an ally of the United States and maintained varied and extensive relations with Israel. In recent years, it has been sliding toward Syria and Iran and away from America, and has become a venomous critic of Israel. If it slides any further, Turkey could become part of an Iranian-Syrian-Turkish triangle that would be a key element in Middle Eastern politics -- to the detriment of Washington, Israel and the moderate Arab states.... There is not much Israel can do under these circumstances.... [But] The Turkish leadership realizes that to mediate between Syria and Israel or to help the Palestinians it must maintain a dialogue with Israel. To take advantage of its assets, Israel has to make a concerted effort, managed by the top governmental echelon. A considerable part of the damage caused last week would have been averted if the Prime Minister had intervened earlier.... Having already made bitter enemies of the Greeks and the Armenians, [the Turks] certainly don't want to do the same with the Jewish people. It is a difficult and complex task, whose fruits will not be immediately evident. The Prime Minister must place it high on his agenda.

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